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BOOK DEPARTMENT.

A full description of the books received, giving size, price, etc., will be found in the list of Publications Received in this issue, or, generally, in a preceding issue of the SCHOOL REVIEW.

The Professional Preparation of Secondary Teachers in the United States. By FRED WASHINGTON ATKINSON. Presented to the University of Leipzig for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

This monograph must be of especial interest not only to the teachers of the United States, but to all who are in any way interested in the education of this country. The writer has, it would seem, prepared his pamphlet with a special view to his readers in America, and has presented clearly some unpleasant truths, the realization of which can not fail to exert a beneficial influence upon our educational interests.

The introduction covers a discussion of the unorganized condition of the schools of the United States, together with the lack of connection between primary and secondary schools, and the lack of uniformity among the secondary schools even of the same State. This lack of connection among the different departments of learning throughout the country implies a great waste of energy, and may at least partly explain the fact of a minimum of result with a maximum of effort, time and money, in connection with our public schools.

Massachusetts is the only State of the Union that has a law compelling the establishment of secondary schools, but neither the high school of Massachusetts, nor of any other State, is adequate to the purpose which its existence implies. Dr. Atkinson complains that the higher institutions of learning do not fit their students for admission to the best colleges and universities.

The author emphasizes the fact that elementary instruction in Germany requires a shorter time for its completion than the same course in the United States; and after a careful study of the German school system, is of the opinion that the cause of this difference in time is largely due to the superior skill of the German teachers.

He is convinced that reform is needed, and that movements in the right direction are even now being made. In support of this view mention is made of the efforts of President Eliot, of Harvard University, for shortening and enriching the grammar school course; and also of an attempt of a committee of members of the National Educational Association to make some investigations which have in view the promotion of greater uniformity in the programs of secondary schools, and in the requirements for admission to colleges and universities. While these efforts are encouraging, the author is of the opinion that they do not touch the

root of the matter,—that the chief cause of the difficulty lies in the lack of preparation for teaching on the part of the teachers of our country.

The first chapter of the pamphlet is devoted to a discussion of the professional standing of the teachers of the secondary schools of the United States. The points of the discussion are briefly summarized as follows :

1. Teachers do not undertake teaching as a profession for life ; and as one result secondary instruction is poorly and mechanically given.

2. More than one half of the teachers are women.

3. Scholarship is the only requirement made by the examining school authorities.

4. Tenure of office is not assured.

5. Salaries are low and there are no retiring pensions.

As a summary of the above points the author is of the opinion that the teachers of the higher institutions of learning in the United States are to-day in the condition of the teachers of the German gymnasium one hundred years ago.

The second chapter discusses the preparation of secondary teachers in Normal Schools. After showing that this preparation is inadequate and defective in the Normal Schools of this country in general and in particular, the author condenses his discussion into the following tabulation :

1. Normal Schools that give instruction in secondary studies supply a small number of secondary teachers with an equipment suitable for the subordinate positions.

2. Normal Schools that allow college graduates to select special studies from the regular course furnish a small number of secondary teachers with an insufficient professional training.

3. Normal Schools with advanced special courses endeavor to give college graduates a professional training. They succeed only in preparing a few high school and normal graduates for teaching special secondary subjects.

4. The New York State Normal College is designed primarily to prepare normal and high school graduates for secondary teaching. College graduates are allowed to take up a special course.

5. The New York College for the Training of Teachers is a private institution that aims to give college graduates an adequate professional training. At present, however, it requires only a secondary education for admission, and limits its instruction in methods of teaching to the brief consideration of three secondary subjects, literature, history, and Latin, and full treatment of but one natural science.*

*The New York College for the Training of Teachers has become affiliated quite recently with Columbia University, and will doubtless eventually increase its requirements for admission so as to exclude any but graduates of colleges and universities.

In the third chapter the author discusses the preparation of secondary teachers in colleges and universities. Of the four hundred and thirty colleges and universities of the United States, twenty-two make provision—more or less inadequate—for pedagogical instruction; yet those colleges and universities supply the majority of the teachers of the secondary institutions of learning.

In the fourth and last chapter the author shows himself a reformer, in that after disclosing the weaknesses of our school systems—if we can be said to have any—and especially of our professional preparation, of which we can hardly be said to have any, he proposes a solution of the problem and a way out of our difficulties.

After a brief sketch of the rise and growth of the idea of training for the profession of teaching, and of the establishment of schools for this work in Germany, he revives an idea which was somewhat prominent in the United States some ten or twelve years ago, viz., the establishment of a professional pedagogical school which shall have for its aim the training of teachers for secondary schools. The candidates for admission should be graduates of colleges and universities that have furnished said candidates with instruction in the "elements of logic, philosophy, psychology and ethics."

The pedagogical school should furnish instruction in the history, theory, and philosophy of education, general and special methodology [whatever that may mean], school organization and management, school hygiene, and school law. Advanced courses in ethics and psychology should also be furnished, as well as opportunities for practice teaching, and observation of instruction.

The course of study should cover two years.

The above is a brief abstract of the pamphlet, and may serve to call the attention of readers to the original work, which will repay careful reading.

The author has limited himself to the consideration of secondary instruction and has kept closely to his subject. Otherwise he might have shown that the weaknesses of secondary instruction characterize primary and even collegiate and university instruction as well. We believe that the teaching force of the secondary schools is just about as competent as that of any other department of instruction in the United States.

To charge the teachers of the United States with lack of scholarship and lack of preparation for teaching is becoming the rule, and unfortunately there is ground for both charges, but in looking for the cause of the American child requiring five years to do the work in Arithmetic, for instance, which the German child does in three (and then not doing it as thoroughly), we must look beyond the teacher. The very best German teachers would find it impossible to do the same work in the same time with the American that he can do with the German child. The conditions of

the home life of the American child are not favorable to the development of power of concentration and of continued application. Two very important characteristics of the successful student in any country are punctuality and industry. These are not characteristic, to any marked degree, of the American child, nor will they be acquired in the school room, unless the home life is such as to emphasize the school life. Even the well-prepared teacher can not do everything without the coöperation of the home and of intelligent school boards and the support of an instructed public opinion.

We are not so sanguine as Dr. Atkinson regarding President Eliot's efforts for shortening and enriching the grammar school course. If it has been found sufficiently difficult to get the children of the elementary courses to cover the present curriculum in the given time, we fail to see how they are to be induced to do more work in less time, especially as there has been no perceptible improvement in home conditions, in teachers, or in the unification of school programs. We are also inclined to ask whether the end in view, in this instance, is to fit the children for life or for admission to college. A college education is presumably a good thing, but we can not wonder if experience with a large number of college graduates in recent years has caused a lack of confidence on the part of the public in regard to the saving virtues of a college education, and the adequacy of its preparation for practical life. We are more inclined to charge secondary schools with failure in fitting students for living than with failure in preparing them for admission to college.

When Dr. Atkinson declares that the teachers of secondary schools in the United States are one hundred years behind the teachers of the German gymnasium, he strikes a blow at our pride, and has, let us hope, silenced for a time the vain boast that the "great American Eagle waves its pinions over the best schools in the world." That we have the opportunity for having the best schools in the world is no doubt true, but we fear that in educational, as well as in some other directions, we are not living up to our highest possibilities.

In considering the preparation of secondary teachers in Normal Schools, Dr. Atkinson laments the absence of college graduates in Normal School faculties, and suggests that teachers without college training may not know what to do with that which a college graduate in search of professional training brings to a Normal School. This remark is reasonable, and theoretically has point. Practically, however, on the basis of experience, we venture to assert that the teachers of Normal Schools, whether college graduates or not, whether men or women, have not as yet been seriously inconvenienced by any surplus of knowledge brought to the Normal Schools by students who are graduates of colleges. Until the reform in connection with secondary instruction, so forc-

ibly urged by Dr. Atkinson, is extended to college and university instruction, there is little ground for apprehending that the scholarship of graduates of these institutions will be misunderstood.

As to the preparation of secondary teachers in colleges and universities, Dr. Atkinson shows very clearly that while such efforts are praiseworthy, they are by no means equal to the real needs of the case. By far the greater part of the pedagogical work done there is a presentation of the opinions of writers who themselves were neither very original nor very clear upon the subject concerning which they wrote. There is in the colleges very little if any opportunity to observe good teaching, while there is no opportunity for practice teaching under intelligent criticism. We have not yet learned in this country that the critic teacher requires as careful training as does the critic in literature, painting, music, or the drama. Indeed, the principles underlying the presentation of a lesson are identical with the principles underlying the above-mentioned departments of art. It is to be feared that our critic teachers are not prepared for their work any more than are the teachers of secondary schools.

We commend especially the fourth chapter to the attention of the reader. The history of the development of professional pedagogical training of teachers for the gymnasium in Germany has much of interest to educators who are fully alive to the needs of this country and who occasionally despair of ever seeing those needs supplied. In Germany growth has been slow, but sure, and we may hope that the next one hundred years will do much to place America on a higher plane educationally.

Dr. Atkinson's proposition concerning the establishment of a professional pedagogical school for the preparation of secondary teachers seems to be opportune, yet it cannot be denied that the difficulties which he sees in the way have a real existence. Other difficulties also, which he seems not to see, may be urged. One is the lack of students suitably prepared in college for undertaking pedagogical work. It is well known that the work done in a large number of our colleges and universities in logic, psychology and philosophy is of such a character as to be of little if any service. The first need of a pedagogical school of the grade mentioned by Dr. Atkinson would be a preparatory department in which these and other necessary subjects should be properly taught.

Another difficulty and to us not the least, would be that of securing proper government support. The people of the United States seem as a rule to be tolerably independent of state or national government, and in many ways this is a good thing, yet when concerted action is necessary to secure the best interests of the country, government authority would seem to be almost indispensable. The United States Government is evidently not yet convinced that the education of the children and youth of the country is its prerogative, or we should not in this year of grace

be obliged to deplore the illiteracy of so large a proportion of the population of the United States, and the incompetent teaching that is attracting the attention of men of other professions and is fast becoming a reproach to us.

Margaret K. Smith.

Oswego Normal School.

Selections from Viri Romae, with Notes, Exercises, and Vocabulary.

By JOHN C. ROLFE, Ph.D., University of Michigan.

It is a common lament among teachers of Latin that the Romans were not thoughtful enough to leave us an easy and interesting book for beginners. Caesar, Cicero, and Virgil are all very well, but not for the boy who has just completed his introductory Latin book. In the study of a language, as in the learning of the piano, the young student loses courage and interest if what he is set to do is obviously beyond his powers. Even the school-boy is capable of feeling the joy of mastery, provided the work given him is such as he can really conquer as he goes forward in it from day to day. But what joy of mastery does a boy of fourteen or fifteen feel in attacking the complicated sentences of Caesar? Nor is this all. The young student loves variety, and a touch of romance. Now there is romance enough in the life of Caesar, but it does not shine very freely through the pages of his Commentaries on the Gallic war; and, even if it did, the Commentaries after all deal with but a single man and his difficulties. What the young boy should first have,—what some Roman should have written for us,—is a brief history of Rome, told in biographies of Roman heroes.

In this really melancholy state of affairs, what the Romans did not do was done, and in no very bad way, by Lhomond, a Latinist and teacher of the last half of the last century. His "Men of Rome" is a skilfully constructed book made up of interesting stories, reflecting well the Roman character and the Roman conception of history. These stories are not of his own writing, but are taken from Roman writers, and are changed in form only where the original form is too difficult for the young student. In a few places Lhomond has admitted late or doubtful Latin, but the defects of this sort are so few as to do no harm.

In the days when the writer of this review was a school-boy, Lhomond's book, in Andrews' edition, was in rather common use in this country. For some unexplained and certainly insufficient reason, it went out of fashion. Professor Rolfe, of Ann Arbor, has rendered a very distinct service to teachers and students by reëditing selections from the book and furnishing them with a vocabulary. The latter half of the text is equipped with brief footnotes, forming judicious aids in reading "at sight". The explanatory notes at the end of the text are careful and good. To these are appended exercises for translation into Latin; which